2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
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778 823 The mountains with their lakes and rivers are the home of the gods and the sources of the land's fertility, and they stand for everything that is holy and healthy. To the Balinese everything that is high is good and powerful, so it is natural that the sea, lower than the lowest point of land, with the sharks and barracuda that infest the waters, and the deadly sea-snakes and poisonous fish that live among the treacherous coral reefs, should be considered as *tenget*, magically dangerous, the home of the evil spirits.

[481] Few Balinese know how to swim and they rarely venture into the sea except to bathe near the shallow beaches, and then they go [224] only a few feet from the shore. There are small settlements of fishermen who brave the malarial coasts of Kuta, Sanur, Benua, [501] and Ketewel, but in general fishing is done on a small scale, either with casting-nets, or in beautiful prows shaped like fantastic "elephant-fish" (*gadja-mina*) with elegant stylized trunks, and eyes to see at night. With their triangular sails apex downward, [225] they go far out to sea at sunset to procure the giant sea-turtles [262] required at the frequent banquets of this feast-loving people. Most Balinese seldom eat fish and remain essentially a rice-eating race. Their repugnance for the sea may be due to the same religious fear of the supernatural that prevents them from climbing to the summit of the great mountains. The Balinese feel that the heights are for the gods, the middle world for humans, and the depths and low points for the spirits of the underworld. They dread the unholy loneliness of the beaches haunted by demons and they believe that the coastline is under the influence of Djero [776] Gedé Metjaling, the Fanged Giant, who lives on the barren island of Nusa Penida. They are one of the rare island peoples in the world who turn their eyes not outward to the waters, but upward to the mountain tops.

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through them, may be of interest because of the foreignness of the setting, of the society in which they are made. My method will consist in an enumeration of a series of patterns of behavior, beginning with the simplest, which give to the outsider his initial impression. The simplest passages of behavior differ from our own no less than do the highly complex thought mechanisms, so closely interlocked with them. Ordinary behavior, the way of walking, of sitting, of greeting acquaintances, of taking nourishment, speech-habits, gesture, and facial expression, all these differ from our own, and all are founded not only on the way of life, but on the people's conception of it, and of the place of the individual in relation to it. And conversely, the higher concepts are built up out of component units, the simpler habits of ordinary behavior. In a discussion of the Balinese temper we shall have to consider both phases, and we shall find them often interdependent and inseparable.

Bearing and Pace

To a Westerner, the most striking characteristic in the ordinary behavior of a Balinese is the absolute poise and balance of his bearing, noticeable in his posture, his walk, his slightest gesture. All mature men and women have this poise, and even the small children develop it with remarkable rapidity. Almost never does one see a stooped or curving back even among the old people, and clumsiness and lack of coördination are rare. The impression is that of a nation favored with an unusually fine physique, with natural dignity and ease in every motion. But together with the impression of ease, one remarks a sort of *carefulness* in the bearing, as if each foot were placed in its appointed place, each turn of the head or flick of the wrist calculated not to disturb an equilibrium delicately set up, and hanging somewhere unseen within the individual. One learns that the Balinese is never unconscious of his position in space, in relation to *kadja*,[1] North, which is the direction of the mountains, and *kelod*, South, the direction of the sea; and in relation to his position above the ground, which should not be higher than that of his social superiors.

[1] The mountains which form the central part of the island are conceived as the abode of the gods, and the highest and most holy place. The sea is by contrast the lowest place, and although there is also a god of the sea, the sea and the seashore are conceived as unholy, and all that is filthy must be cast there, or into the rivers which carry their own filth down to the sea. As the present observations were made in South Bali, for the sake of convenience *kadja* is translated North and *kelod* South. On the other side of the mountains, in North Bali, *kadja* means South, and *kelod* North, since the relative position of the inhabitants to the mountains is reversed. *Kangin*, East, and *kaoeh*, West, remain the same in both localities.

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superior. It would seem that a great deal of the "carefulness" in the manner of the Balinese springs from his habit of adjusting his position according to the laws of his cosmology and his social group. The other great factor is the habitual avoidance of any impulsive movement which could shock or otherwise momentarily disturb the feeling of well-being in the body.

The individual Balinese moves slowly, with deliberation. Westerners, seeing for the first time films representing the Balinese at their daily tasks, are immediately struck by the slow tempo of their actions. If a man seated in one pavilion of his house-court suddenly wishes to show something which is in another pavilion, he will rise to his feet and saunter across the intervening space, quite as if he were going for a casual stroll. He will never hurry, as we would, eager to grasp the object which has come to mind. There is plenty of time, and to hurry would be unusual, unnecessary, and stupid—a waste of energy. Walking along the roads, each individual progresses with an even, measured step. The custom is to walk in single file, probably because the trails are narrow, and even today when the gravel covered motor roads are used for long distance walking, there is only a narrow track at the side which is comfortable to bare feet. Rarely does one individual walking in the single file pass another, for all go at the same rhythmic pace. This pace seems to be kept over long distances as well as short, and is hardly influenced when the walker carries a medium load (about forty pounds). Women carry such a load with facility, balanced on their heads. Men usually carry much heavier weights, divided in two parcels, one of which is slung at either end of a bamboo pole balanced on the shoulder. Invariably when the load is heavy (a hundred pounds or so) the man with the shoulder-bar proceeds at a short run, almost a trot, and he keeps up this pace without ever slowing down to a walk. The idea is not to get there more quickly; but the motion of the trot vibrates the pliant shoulder-bar, so that the weights at either end swing up and down, thus relieving the pressure on the shoulder. This pace however has become customary to people heavily laden, and a woman bearing on her head one of the large offerings of rice, fruit, and cakes (often a cone four or five feet high) will proceed with the same accelerated steps that the men use under their heavy shoulder-bars.

A test of the evenness of the habitual pace, kept up over long distances, came on the occasion of an annual ceremony at a temple on the southernmost shore. A Balinese whose house stood next to

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that now things were getting worse, and that the place should by all means be purified by a great *metjaroe* ceremony, to drive away the demons and bad spirits who were growing bolder. Falling is a shock which upsets the nice balance of well-being, just as the feeling of a rush of blood to the head in an inverted position is uncomfortable, and must therefore be wrong.[2*] Fathers and grandfathers who hold their young children in their laps for hours at a time never swing them about nor cast them in the air as ours are apt to do. Men and women will always endeavor to keep their erect posture, their even pace, their absolute balance, regardless of obstacles in the way, and to cultivate this tendency in the child. White men who scamper down a hillside, in excess of good spirits and momentum, or who leap over a stream, will always evoke laughter in the Balinese who walks sedately on, stepping into the water as if it did not exist, so long as the even measure of his gait is not interrupted. Because his feet are bare and the water warm, there would seem to be no reason to exert himself to jump over the stream. If it were not that the Balinese never jump, one would say that their habits are only better adjusted than ours to a climate uniformly hot, where it is better to conserve one's energy for those exertions required in the daily work. But the systematic avoidance of all shocks and pains and disturbances of the circulation of the blood characteristic of all adult Balinese would indicate that a more specialized consciousness of the body is involved. And this theory is supported by the fact that the average Balinese, although he has plentiful supplies of distilled arak and palm-wine, does not like to get drunk. The feeling of confusion, the lack of his usual surefootedness and sense of equilibrium, are so unpleasant to him that he does not often risk the experience. And the whirling of the universe which precedes nausea is positively terrifying. Then he is indeed *lost*.

Malay people have a term for the sensation of being lost, *keliru*. In the Balinese language the word is *paling*. To be *paling*, they say, is "not to know where North is"; in other words, he is *paling* who has lost his sense of direction, or who has lost the sense of his own position in relation to the geography of his world. One man whom I knew was taken for a trip in a motor car. He fell asleep during the

[2*] The Balinese do not express in words the idea that to upset balance is wrong, but they do express it in their affective response. A look of pain, of fear, or of anxiety appears on the face of an adult who tumbles, or of a child who is held upside down, which far surpasses in feeling the response we should expect, and is comparable only to the responses called out by other "wrongs" against the social and religious laws.